



## *Older Americans Act Information and Assistance Systems and Services*

The growth of the older adult population has increased the demand for information by both older persons and their caregivers. Today, older Americans face a complicated array of choices and decisions about a variety of issues, such as health care, housing, financial management, nutrition, and long-term care. With so many overlapping federal and state programs and their different requirements, older adults and their caregivers often need help to know what services are available and whether they qualify. The Older Americans Act Information and Assistance System helps older adults access social and health services across the country. This system has gained and currently enjoys substantial credibility among older adults as a source of accurate and unbiased information and referral.

### **What is Older Americans Act Information and Assistance?**

The primary purpose of the Information and Assistance System and its component national, state and local information and assistance systems and services is to support all older adults and their caregivers by:

- Assessing their needs;
- Identifying the most appropriate services to meet their needs; and
- Linking the older persons and caregivers to agencies providing these services.

Information and assistance systems are the vital link between older persons who need services and those who can provide them.

### **Components of the Older American Act Information and Assistance System**

State and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) and local service providers operate information and assistance programs. Established by the 1973 Amendments to the Older Americans Act, these systems inform, guide, and link older persons to available, appropriate, and acceptable services to meet their needs. There are more than 2,500 information and assistance programs across the country that provide information to older persons and caregivers through nearly 14 million contacts annually. These programs are key to connecting older persons and their caregivers with much needed information on services such as:

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| ■ Adult day care;                      | ■ Home repair and modification; |
| ■ Community senior centers;            | ■ Homemaker/chore services;     |
| ■ Congregate and home-delivered meals; | ■ Housing options;              |
| ■ Consumer protection;                 | ■ Legal assistance;             |
| ■ Elder abuse prevention;              | ■ Pension Counseling;           |
| ■ Energy assistance;                   | ■ Respite services;             |
| ■ Financial services;                  | ■ Reverse mortgages;            |
| ■ Health insurance counseling;         | ■ SSI and Food Stamps; and      |
| ■ Home health care;                    | ■ Transportation services.      |

### **The Eldercare Locator**

The Eldercare Locator, a national toll-free service established by the Administration on Aging, helps older persons and their caregivers find necessary or convenient services and resources in their own communities or throughout the country. The Eldercare Locator puts callers in touch with public and private organizations serving older adults. No matter where an individual lives, a toll-free number, 1-800-677-1116, is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time.



### **AoA Website**

The AoA website ([www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)) provides information for and about older persons, their families, and the professionals and organizations involved in aging programs. It also offers information about the AoA and the aging network and serves as an important link to the web sites maintained by the state and area agencies on aging, as well as to other resources related to aging programs and services.

### **National Aging Information Center**

The National Aging Information Center (NAIC) maintains a bibliographic database about older adults with more than 4,000 citations and abstracts on aging-related issues. The database also includes research summaries, unpublished materials, software, and policy reports.

Working in close partnership with its sister agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the AoA is the official Federal agency dedicated to policy development, planning and the delivery of supportive home and community-based services to older persons and their caregivers. The AoA works through the national aging network of 57 State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 225 Tribal and Native organizations representing 300 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal organizations, and two organizations serving Native Hawaiians, plus thousands of service providers, adult care centers, caregivers, and volunteers. For more information about the AoA, please contact:

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200 Independence Avenue, S.W.	Email:	<a href="mailto:aoainfo@aoa.gov">aoainfo@aoa.gov</a>
Washington, DC 20201	Web:	<a href="http://www.aoa.gov">www.aoa.gov</a>

**Eldercare Locator: 1-800-677-1116, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET**